

grant that “[t]he U.S. students also visited Coral World Ocean Park and resort locations, while both groups took shopping trips.” Although the grant was supposed to promote environmental stewardship, a majority of money for the grant (52 percent) was spent on travel, and less than half the time of the trips was spent on environmental-related activities. The grant was also used to purchase 128 computers that met only general education needs that were not even part of EPA’s mission.

*Smithsonian Director*

According to an investigation by the Washington Post, the director of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian spent \$250,000 in taxpayer money on “first-class transportation and plush lodging in hotels all around the world, including more than a dozen trips to Paris.” A separate investigation found that another top Smithsonian official accumulated nearly \$90,000 in unauthorized expenses between 2000 and 2005. His expenses included “charges for jet travel, his wife’s trip to Cambodia, hotel rooms, luxury car service, catered staff meals and expensive gifts.” The Smithsonian inspector general found that a few months after this Smithsonian head took office, he stopped filing the required monthly documentation “for administrative ease.”

*Government Printing Office, Daily Printing of the Congressional Record*

The Government Printing Office prints approximately 5,600 copies of the Congressional Record for each day Congress is in session. This cost the American taxpayer over \$6.5 million annually. Of the 5,600 copies printed daily, over 1,400 are distributed to House offices, Committees and post offices, over 1,500 are distributed to Senate offices and Committees, and the remaining copies are distributed to various sources, including federal agencies and federal depository libraries all at the taxpayers’ expense. The daily Congressional Record is available online and previous Congressional Records are available online dating back to 1989. Instead of accepting that we live in an increasingly paperless world and stopping the wasteful printing of the Congressional Record, we would rather just continue big spending as usual by throwing millions of dollars and tons of paper in the waste basket.

*ECHO Center*

\$97,000 was appropriated in the 2008 Omnibus for the ECHO Center in Burlington, VT, for education regarding the Lake Champlain Quadracentennial. According to its Website, the ECHO Center, also known as the Ecology, Culture, History, and Opportunity at the Leahy Center, is a lake aquarium, science center, and community resource. Its purpose is to “educate and delight people about the Ecology, Culture, History, and Opportunities for stewardship of the Lake Champlain Basin.” To complete the ECHO center, a \$14.5 million ten-year fundraising campaign was necessary. According to its Website, more than half of the funds for this campaign came from the federal government. The Lake Champlain Basin Science Center—the non-profit organization that runs ECHO—listed a total of more than \$12 million in assets at the close of the 2005 fiscal year and has received more than \$4.4 million in federal grants since 2000—including more than \$600,000 last year. It is expected that the quadracentennial will bring in revenues of up to \$133 million. In light of these estimates why is further federal investment outside of the competitive bidding process for an educational exhibit regarding this special event necessary? The fact that numerous other educational and heritage-related initiatives already exist, or are being pur-

sued on the state and local level makes this request for additional federal funds unnecessary and duplicative. Given that the ECHO center has already spent over \$7 million in federal taxpayer funds on national priorities such as becoming the first LEED-certified building in Vermont, and offering a water-play space for kids to build dams and float boats, and that its net assets total more than \$12 million, the federal taxpayer may be forgiven for thinking this is a poor investment of federal funds.

*DOT—Museum of Glass*

In FY 2006, Congress gave \$500,000 to the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington. The mission of the museum is to provide a dynamic learning environment to appreciate the medium of glass through creative experiences, collections and exhibitions. The museum showcases works by internationally known artists who illuminate trends in contemporary art, highlighting glass within a full range of media. The Museum of Glass has featured exhibits in Mining Glass, which showcases the work of eight internationally distinguished contemporary artists working with glass, as well as Czech Glass from the 1945–1980 period. The museum also features live glassmaking in the Hot Shop Amphitheater and dining in the Gallucci’s Glass Café.

*Beach Nourishment for Imperial Beach and other Beaches*

An earmark included in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized \$8.5 million for current beach nourishment for Imperial Beach in Southern California and federal funding for periodic beach nourishment every ten years for a period of 50 years for an estimated cost of \$20,550,000 in federal funds. Such “nourishment,” however, is not essential and does not merit siphoning funds away from higher priority Corps projects, such as protecting the thousands living in the Sacramento valley who are still at risk of catastrophic flooding. The White House Statement of Administration Policy urged eliminating funding for beach nourishment in WRDA and President Clinton also sought to discourage federal beach nourishment projects. Adding sand to beaches, at best, provides a temporary fix to local erosion concerns that could potentially lead to property damage and encourages risky development and construction along shorelines at federal taxpayer expense. The \$1.2 billion wasted through beach restoration federal appropriations from 1995–2005 could have been spent on other federal priorities or gone to pay off our growing national debt.

*Wake Ferry, WA*

\$1.54 million was appropriated in the 2008 Omnibus for the Kitsap Transit, Rich-Passage Wake Impact Study. “[This] study . . . is working to finalize the design plans and specifications for a high speed passenger ferry service between Bremerton and Seattle. The funding will be used to study the response of the sands and gravels on the beaches along the route through Rich Passage, biological monitoring and analysis, financial feasibility analysis and public outreach including a website and newsletter. The funds will also include the use of an existing foil assisted catamaran to simulate actual operating conditions of a designed boat so that potential impacts, if any, can be assessed and appropriate measures can be taken to protect the shoreline.” In total \$7.79 million has been appropriated for this study along with \$4 million for earmarks for a “low-wake, passenger-only ferry.” Both of these projects have been almost entirely federally-funded during a time when the Kitsap Transit Authority moved into a new 45,000 sq. ft office and retail complex that offers

stunning water and mountain views. Not to worry, though, they can be assured that their taxpayer dollars have created the “lowest-wake boat in the world” when it hits the water. While environmentally-friendly high-speed ferries may be convenient and provide greater economic opportunities for certain communities, they are not national priorities and should not be funded by federal taxpayer dollars until more pressing national infrastructure concerns are addressed.

*Bangor Waterfront, ME*

\$262,500 was earmarked in the 2008 Omnibus for development of the Bangor Waterfront Park on the Penobscot River for the city of Bangor, ME. Federal funding for developing this waterfront exceeds \$4.5 million through various earmarks, grants, and contracts. “The park will be the centerpiece of Bangor’s waterfront destination for local and regional populations and out-of-state tourists alike. It will provide several venues for outdoor performances including the American Folk Festival. The park will complete long-term efforts to acquire, clear, remediate, and redevelop Bangor’s historic waterfront.” Playgrounds, a fitness area for adults, a trail system, and a picnic area are things that the community is expecting to see on the waterfront. These regional desires, however, should not be prioritized over national infrastructure needs like deficient federal bridges.

*Chesapeake Buoy*

\$446,500 was appropriated in the 2008 omnibus for an interpretive buoy system along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The purpose of the buoys is to “promote awareness of the Bay’s condition, and to support the stewardship efforts of educators, trail users, government, and civic organizations dedicated to the preservation of the Bay and its natural environment.” This buoy system will “mark” the newly created John Smith National Water Trail on the Chesapeake Bay. The “water trail” is the first entirely water-based National Historic Trail. The recipient of this earmark is the Conservation Fund of Arlington, Virginia; and other partners of this project include the National Geographic Society, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Sultana, Verizon, and others. The Conservation Fund is listed as having net assets totaling more than \$275 million and has received over \$23 million in federal funds since 2000, according to FedSpending.org. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which has encouraged the creation of this NPS trail, boasts just under \$70 million in net assets and had a revenue surplus of \$7 million in 2005 alone. The National Geographic Society reported an income of \$531,595,929 with over \$45,000,000 in profits and total assets of \$1,127,705,462 in 2005. Promoting tourism in the Chesapeake Bay and increasing understanding of the historic voyages of Captain Smith are well intentioned goals but are clearly not urgent, federal priorities. Likewise interactive buoys may be innovative ways to educate tourists and visitors about the Bay and Captain Smith’s voyages, but they are inessential extravaganzas. Fortunately, the organizations that are heading up this effort, including the recipient of the earmark, have sufficient financial assets to ensure the continuation of this project.

*Earmarks for relatives*

According to a recent investigation by USA Today, in 2006 “lobbying groups employed 30 family members to influence spending bills that their relatives with ties to the House and Senate appropriations committees oversaw or helped write.” 2006 appropriations bills contained \$750 million for projects championed by these lobbyists. Of